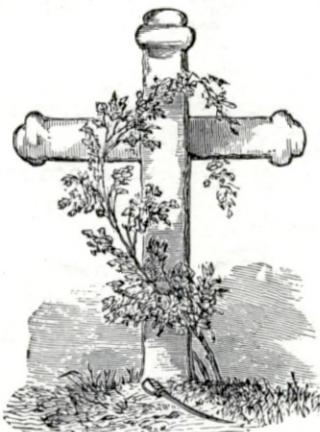


C. H. S.

BANDWAGON

JULY, 1953

25c



In Memorium

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VIRGIL CAMPBELL

DR. E. L. COOPER

WALTER DROBISCH

ALEX OLIVER

FAY F. REED

"DOC" WADDELL

ALLEN P. WESCOTT

"SUNSET AND EVENING STAR
AND ONE CLEAR CALL FOR ME;
LET THERE BE NO MOANING OF THE BAR
WHEN I PUT OUT TO SEA."

CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded in 1939

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25c a single copy
\$1.25 a year in U.S.A.

Advertising rates—
\$1.00 per col. inch

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The Editor Says

I hope by now that you have all received your 1953 Rosters. It appears that we have lost ten members over the course of years. This is not as serious as it looks. At that time there was a lot of "dead wood" in the organization, who had been carried along for years without paying any dues except for the initial fee. Now the organization is on a much sounder basis than it was four years ago as we have tried to keep everyone posted as to when dues are due. Anyone who is a genuine member and is having a little financial trouble, we carry along until such time as they can pay up.

Along the same line, we must keep adding new members. I know you see other people who are on the lot, and they are potential members. We would be glad to send a Bandwagon and an application blank to any of these people if we just know who they are.

NEW MEMBER

WILLIE INGRAM, No. 541

P. O. Box 45
Codell, Kansas

CORRECTION

Dick Conover reports an error in his article in the June Bandwagon. On page 11, line 7, the date should read 1849 instead of 1840.

Circus Toys and Miniatures

By "Tard" Northrop

Recently we hear much about toys and especially interested are those of us who are interested in Circus and its History. A few years ago a club was born, its object to whittle and model items via circus. Their chief interest seems to be to collect a great amount of toys and display them, as a part of their display, during the Christmas season. I saw many samples of these items on display in our large toy and department stores, but none were American made, all are European made, and ranged from a little money to exorbitant prices (depending upon the location of the store).

I discussed this matter with some of our circus miniature collectors (not modelers), and they were heavy on the defense of Germany and her toys, and even were very positive that circus models originated in Germany. This just is not so, and I must be honest with myself as an American, so let me correct this thought, and give you the facts for models and toys, as well.

Circus models and toys played a big part in early America. In New York City in 1870 there was a firm that turned out, oh say 50 million toys, some of circus design and not until 1890 did Germany send America any toys, and all of them were patterned here in America and sent to Germany for production (reason? cheap labor). Stiegel manufactured toys of glass in 1840, had a factory in Connecticut. Then along in 1856 the wind up type came along. Among them were circus prancing, trotting horses, circus clowns, acrobats in action, trained animals and all in action. Perhaps the largest center for mechanical circus toys was Bridgeport, Conn., for history tells us, of Jerome Secor who opened a sizeable factory in this city in 1868 but closed it to enter other business in 1892. His shop was perhaps the largest equipped to manufacture any type of mechanical toy. The Ives Co., was also located here.

Many of the early Circus mechanical gadgets were made of tin but cast iron soon took its place, and rapidly circus models and toys were replaced via the wind up railroads, and today we have the model electric rail roads, for there seems a better commercial market for rail work and their equipment.

Personally, I feel that there is a place, (but just where?) for early model or toy circus within our archives, but do bear in mind that the first circus models in miniature were made right here in our America.

In commemoration of National Circus week, the circus friends in Wichita went all out. Charley Jones featured Emmett Kelly on the cover of his nationally famous Laugh Book. Joe Tracy of Buffalo, N.Y., also caught the fever, and put his model circus on display at the Hens and Kelly department store, using six electric models in half scale—Merry-Go-Round, Ferris Wheel, Seals, balancing balls, etc. Also a 12 foot Circus train and 12 feet of Parade wagons, as well as a two foot main Circus tent with three rings and performers and animals.

The Big One in Canada

From Herb "Pop" Fursier

**It was here and it has gone,
But it's memory lingers on.**

The Big One showed London, Ontario, Wednesday, July 8, 1953.

The weather was ideal and being a half holiday the people turned out from one hundred miles around.

They had a three quarter house in the afternoon and a capacity crowd at night.

The writer traveled seventy miles to catch it and does not consider either time or money wasted.

The Acts were about as good as I can ever remember seeing, and their two Spec Parades were beautiful.

It is not boasting to say that it is truly the "Greatest Show on Earth."

The writer had the pleasure of meeting some old friends in the persons of Merle Evans, Emmett Kelly, Otto Griebling and Kay Clark.

The show put up in the Fair Grounds but were cramped for space, although London has about the second largest fairground in Eastern Canada. The Midway stands were too close together. The Cook House and Horse Tents were a good quarter mile from the Big Top.

But even at that the writer and his friends enjoyed themselves and had a wonderful day.

Letter From Jake Posey

Huntington Park, California.

June 30, 1953

Bob, Agnes, Ann King

Dear Friends:

Many thanks for the nice birthday card, also, for the cards you mailed to the members, telling them of my birthday. They produced wonderful results. I received four hundred cards . . . and they are still coming. A great many gave no address, and they joined the C. H. S. after the roster was printed. I am unable to acknowledge receipt of their cards. I wish you would notify them through the "Bandwagon". I am most thankful, and it is very gratifying to me, to know I have so many friends . . . I will be sending another story in the near future. I am feeling fine.

Yours fraternally,

(signed) JAKE POSEY

Kelly-Miller Blow Down, Wil...

PHOTOS BY



mington, Ohio, June 9, 1953

CONOVERS



"The Big One" Has a "Big One" in Richmond, Indiana

Ringling Bros. Barnum and Bailey Circus played Richmond, Indiana, on Thursday, July 16, to two near capacity houses. The Show had never been in Richmond since the consolidation, and the Ringling show played here last in 1912. From every angle it was a big day for everyone in this territory, and of course we feel sure that the Ringling management found it to be a good day, too. I went to Dayton, Ohio, the day before, and can assure you that business in Dayton did not in any way approach the business done in Richmond.

C. H. S. Member Fred Lohman had an especially big day here. As many of you know, Fred has to be in wheeled chair and must be taken to these things. He was allowed, through the courtesy of the management, to have his car parked in the back yard all day on into the night, so that he saw it go up and saw it come down. In addition to this, through the courtesy of Bill McGough, arrangements were made so that Fred was taken into the menagerie before the doors opened for the matinee, and then employees of the show put his chair into the grandstand, blocked it with wooden blocks so that it would not roll, and showed him every courtesy and consideration that might have been shown to him.

Yes—it was a big one for everyone—and we of Richmond invite the "Big One" to come back next year, and the next, and so on and on into infinity.

ROBERT C. KING, Sec'y

HOW ABOUT IT?

Editor's Note: Leon Holecheck is one of our newer and younger members, having joined in June of 1952 at the age of 15.

Quoting from a recent letter "I left home last spring and joined up with Diano Bros. Circus. I was gone for a good three months. I came home the last part of May, for my Sister's wedding. I want to go back very badly, but I am going to try to finish school first. I learned how to Eat Fire, and Human Pincushion. I also walked the ladder of Swords, and Torture Bed of Nails. I got a lot of experience, and met a lot of nice people."

Old Vent Figures, Books and Photos



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Circus Material For Sale

Books, Route Cards, Tickets,
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Several Hundred Issues of
Billboard

WILLIE INGRAM
CODELL, KANSAS

G. I. Visits European Circuses

Excerpts of letter from "Chuck" Sateja to Bette Leonard

Sateja is a former trouper who is now stationed in Fakenham, Norfolk England. He has been with Russell Bros., Dailey, and a number of circuses as clown and perch performer.

"These are the Circuses I have caught so far this year in England, Bertram Mills Circus, Chipperfield Circus, Lord Sangers Circus, Ringland Circus, Bill Smarts New World Circus, Billy Russells New World Circus, Harringay Arena Circus, Belle Vue Circus, Luckens Rainbow Circus, Cirque Medrano and Cirque D, (the last two in France).

On the first of May with a 15 day leave on the Continent, visited the following—Belgium, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and France. In Germany I saw the very first Circus I saw after the war ended—the Harry Williams Circus where I used to spend my off duty hours, and where I was caught for Fraternizing with the Germans and cost me a \$65.00 fine and Circus Krone which I consider Germany's biggest and best and Circus Appelle. I had a grand time visiting with old friends and newly made friends, and believe me I was treated royally. In Switzerland, I journeyed to see Circus Knie, Switzerland's best and biggest Circus, and Circus Grock which is nothing more than a variety show but very entertaining. In Austria once again visited the Appelle Circus and watched the tearing down operations and marveled at the sight of seeing a 4 mast tent coming down, which is all done by hand. It's amazing to see these shows set up without the aid of elephants, tractors, etc. They get them up in no time at all.

In France I went to see Circus Pinder which is a very large and nicely framed motorized Circus carrying several very good acts which would make a hit with an American audience. Circus Amar, in which I was disappointed, as I was led to believe this was France's Best Circus, but I sure had a sad disappointment. The less said the better I like it. Also caught the Matine of Circus Radie, a very small variety Circus with plenty of good talent. I had to leave in a hurry in order to catch my train back to Belgium. In Belgium I missed my dates of the Circus Straussburger and never got a chance to visit with my friends."

D U E S

From time to time I have members ask me when their dues are due. I am always glad to tell them. However, it is a simple matter to know when without the help of the Richmond office. Just look at your last membership card. In the upper right hand corner you will find an expiration date.

C. H. S. Member Dies

FAIRBURY, Neb., July 4—Virgil Campbell, 84, former partner in operation of Campbell Bros.' Circus, died here Tuesday (30). He had broken a hip and wrist in a fall and was in a hospital at the time of his death. Funeral services were conducted here Wednesday (1). He is survived by a daughter, Gertrude Campbell.

A native of Augusta, Ill., Campbell and three brothers lived in Fairbury when they framed a medicine show with Fred Hatfield and Lee Greer in 1894. The show was converted into a wagon circus and later moved by railroad. It was closed in 1912. After that, one of the group, Al G. Campbell, continued in circus business, largely with small shows built at the William P. Hall farm, Lancaster, Mo. Fairbury was the site of Campbell Bros.' winter quarters, and Virgil Campbell made his home here since the show closed. The show, nicknamed the "Hump Show," used music of "The Campbells Are Coming" as bally.

In 1951, the Jefferson County Fair here honored Campbell with a "circus day," and several former employees of the Campbell circus attended.

(Copied from the Billboard)

* * *

The sympathy of the Circus Historical Society is extended to his daughter.

Sam Dock, 89, Dies; Trouped For 69 Years

READING, Pa., July 18—Sam Dock, 89, a veteran of 69 years of troupers, died at his home here July 3. He had been ill several weeks. Dock was on the road every season from 1883 thru 1951.

He joined French & Company's Circus, a boat show, then moved to Howe, Pullman & Company and French & Monroe. Subsequently, he was a performer with Harris Nickle Plate, Orrin Barber, and Forebaugh.

Starting his own shows, he had Dock & Jordan in 1887 and Dock and Sallade in 1889. For the next three seasons he was superintendent of Welch Bros.' Circus and owned a one-third interest in it. He and Al F. Wheeler left Welch to start the Wheeler Circus in partnership in 1893.

Starting in 1894, Dock operated his own show, sometimes using his name as the title and sometimes calling it the Great Keystone Show. He continued this operation until the 1920's. From about 1929 until 1942, the show was usually known as Brison Bros. Dock worked dogs and ponies on Bond Bros., Reo Bros. and Dix Bros. from 1942 to 1946, when he joined Raymond-Lee Circus, owned by his nephews, Ray and Lee Brison. His final season was 1951, when the Brisons' show was Lee Bros. for the first half and the Sam Dock Circus for the second half of the season.

(Copied from the Billboard)

—Bandwagon, July Issue, 1953—Page 7

1953 C.H.S. CONVENTION CANCELLED

It is with regret that I must announce that the 1953 Circus Historical Convention has been cancelled.

Word came to me today—July 29—that Fred Leonard, husband of Bette Leonard, has had a heart attack, making it impossible for Bette to attend the Convention. I called Dr. Karland Frischkorn at once, and he told me that there have been very few reservations at Norfolk, so it was decided to call the whole thing off for this year.

It is to be regretted that this has had to come to pass, but in view of the fact that I have had letters from most of the regulars who attend our conventions, telling me that they cannot make it, maybe it is all for the best. Personally I was sort of up a tree, as things have not broken just right here at the office—and I was having trouble in making arrangements to get to Norfolk.

Dr. Frischkorn suggests that next year we have a convention in the Middle West—and I am asking now that any suggestions as to that site, be made to me. So lets make it the biggest and best ever in 1954.

ROBERT C. KING, Sec'y C. H. S.